

Places

115 Dartmouth Park Hill

115 Dartmouth Park Hill, London, England in 1974 was a disused launderette with corrugated metal bolted to the front and gave every appearance of being either derelict or a squat. Nevertheless I rented the place for 50p per week from S.C.H. (Student Community Housing).

I had been hired by a man who called himself Mike Deal to live in the building and act as caretaker. He was paying me £5 per week and I had to pay the 50p rent each week from out of the £5.

I lived on rice and vegetables and sometimes beans on toast. I couldn't do very much with the building. It was in a glorious state of disrepair and I liked it that way, although I expected to smarten it up a bit at some stage when there were more people and some money for tools and materials.

The idea of the place was that we would develop it into an information centre and crash pad for North London Alternative Society types. In other words the Freak Scene of Post-Hippy, Pre-Punk rockers and mystics which were what was happening in 1974. It lasted a few months with Mike Deal turning up and making occasional appearances. Each time Mike came to see how things were going he got weirder. At first I thought he was joking when he talked about his ambition to set up "camps" for young people which he would personally "corrupt".

After a few of his visits I began to realise that he was pretending to joke. He was actually pulling a double bluff and his intention really was to make real his fantasy of corrupting large numbers of young people in these "camps" he was planning.

Other people came to live with me at 115. My ex-girlfriend Sandy became my new girlfriend. A few travellers answered the advertisements I had put around. I made contact with some London Freak Scene groups. We went to a meeting in Camden to discuss the next Stonehenge Festival. A slightly famous festival freak called Sid Rawle was there and shocked us by suggesting that Stonehenge should be painted with psychedelic designs. Some film of previous festivals was shown. The film had a scene where a couple of middle-aged hippies, one male and one female, were walking around in the nude but they hadn't wiped their bottoms and somebody embarrassed Sid by claiming that the male one was him. Sid angrily and emphatically denied this.

I had people staying in the main big room at 115. I had to break up a fight when a homophobic guy bedding down at one end of the room realised that the two guys at the other end of the same room were a gay couple. He was going for them with a broken bottle but I managed to talk him out of it. Then I realised that there was blood on my hands and I was looking to see whose blood it was and then it turned out to be mine!

A bloke called Brian Sheepwash who had left the Hare Krishna Temple came to stay. We had known him in Glastonbury but we didn't realise he was a psychopathic maniac. After he had been at 115 for a short time he tried to take over the building and threatened me with a pipe wrench. I remember him turning his head at a slight angle, grinning and shouting "I MEAN it, maaaaaaan!" A few years later I would hear almost the exact same words said in the exact same intonation by Johnny Rotten on the Sex Pistols album.

When I lived at 115 I spent a considerable amount of time walking the streets of the Archway, Highgate and Parliament Hill area of North London barefoot and wearing a velvet jacket and velvet trousers. Stopping every now and then to sit down and take out my copy of the Tao Teh Ching from my army surplus shoulder bag. I would sit reading the words of Lao Tse and feeling that I was on my way to enlightenment.

In the vicinity we had the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, The Beshara Centre (Sufi) and the grave of Karl Marx (famous dead person).

Sandy had joined a group called "The Emin" and persuaded me to join too.

The attempt to turn 115 into a useful information centre was rolling along nicely with a few problems which I didn't entirely understand and then it came to a sudden halt when a gang of men with pick axe handles forced their way in and told us to leave, shouting "Give us all your money and all your drugs and then get out!!"

I explained that we didn't do drugs and that we had almost no money. They accepted this, took the tiny amount of money we had and forced us to leave. And that was the end of 115. I later phoned Mike Deal and explained to him what had happened. He didn't seem surprised. I was still only 20 years of age and a rather naive 20 year old at that.

We moved to a squat at a deserted hospital in Muswell Hill. Then to a building nicknamed "Emin Towers" which was near the Everyman Cinema in Hampstead. After a short stay there I was told by Orman of the Emin to move back to my mum's house at Morden and stay there.

Morden Park

During the years of being brainwashed by the Emin group I went regularly to Morden Park and sat with my back against a tree. This was a practice suggested by Leo, the head of the Emin, as a way to make connection with Mother Nature and her LAWS.

I went and sat under that tree week after week after week for months and months and months. Next door to Morden Park was the Express Dairy building. A few years later that Express Dairy Building was bought by an Islamic group who built a mosque where the dairy had been.

The Baitul Futuh Mosque at Morden is now one of the largest mosque complexes in Europe and belongs to the community of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at.

Funny how things turn out.

7a The High Street Glastonbury

Number 7a was a place in which I lived from 1984 to 1987. During the time I lived there I was violently attacked six times. Also during that time I worked for the Assembly Rooms, for

Children's World Charity, for the Glastonbury Festival, for Street Youth Club and for Mendip District Council Social Services.

Lucy Lepchani, who lived there for a while, criticised me for being continually work orientated. She was right to some extent but I knew that, when I got old, I wouldn't want to look back on a life spent down the pub. It was important to work at all these various things so that I wouldn't feel that I had wasted a life.

When I first moved into a room in 7a the other tenants were members of Gog Theatre Company and their friends from Liverpool. When the Liverpoolians had gone various other people moved in and these include an astounding gothic woman called Taj who was undoubtedly a practicing witch and radiated a powerful presence everywhere she went. Taj and Mandy Freewoman, another resident, were starting up a goth magazine of some kind and Taj wanted me to write a column under the name of "Uncle Festus". I didn't like that idea much so I mumbled something vague and never wrote it.

7a was upstairs from a shop called Gothic Image so, as you can imagine, there was an ongoing influence of that.

At one stage I drew a mural on an upstairs wall showing Pooh and Piglet in front of a gothic vampire castle. The landlord didn't like it so I had to scrub it off again.

I've written about 7a in this book before and, since all of this is a first draft, I will quite possibly decide to consolidate these various pieces into one at some stage.

As described before there was a murder there in 1987 and I moved to London temporarily after that. Things had gotten very serious and nasty.

Psychogeography: These places are all significant nodal points on the ley line map of my inner world.